

In the Claims:

Please amend claim 4 as follows:

4. A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 3, wherein~~  
for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said  
friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said  
pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an  
outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a  
respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a  
draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing  
member,

said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate  
members includes a first elongated slot and a first lubricating  
insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to  
prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism  
after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly  
and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating  
insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected  
lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable  
plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an  
outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective  
said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate  
members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy

generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 5,~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 8 as follows:

8. A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 7,~~  
wherein for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly,  
said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said  
pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an  
outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a  
respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a  
draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing  
member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable  
plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an  
outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective  
said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate  
members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy  
generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear  
assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said  
inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof  
frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective  
inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for  
absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy  
generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear

assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism

(iv) said outer tapered surface of each of said wedge shoe members includes a third elongated slot and a third lubricating insert member located within said third elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism

after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly  
and during a release cycle thereof said third lubricating  
insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected  
lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member  
including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces  
frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a  
respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing  
at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during  
closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 15 as follows:

15. A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear  
assembly, ~~as recited in claim 14, wherein~~ for absorbing both  
buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a  
railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track  
operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft  
gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a  
first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially  
opposed second end thereof:

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a  
cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an



inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member, said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members include a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally

engageable with a respective said inner surface of  
said pair of outer stationary plate members for  
absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy  
generated during closure of such friction clutch type  
draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each  
of said inner stationary plate members having an outer  
surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least  
a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair  
of movable plate members for absorbing at least a  
second portion of such heat energy generated during  
closure of such friction clutch type draft gear  
assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner  
stationary plate members being tapered at a first  
predetermined angle;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge  
shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally  
engageable with a respective said inner surface  
of said tapered stationary plate members for  
absorbing a third portion of heat energy  
generated during closure of such friction clutch  
type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within

said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 17 as follows:

17. A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly, ~~as recited in claim 16, wherein~~ for absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof;

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of

said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot  
and a second lubricating insert member disposed within  
said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental  
sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after  
closure of such friction clutch type draft gear  
assembly and during a release cycle thereof said  
second lubricating insert members are formed from a  
mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at  
least 2% graphite ;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge  
shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally  
engageable with a respective said inner surface  
of said tapered stationary plate members for  
absorbing a third portion of heat energy  
generated during closure of such friction clutch  
type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point  
disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface  
inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to  
a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch  
mechanism, said tapered upper surface being  
tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and  
about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

### Amended Claims

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 3, wherein~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member,

said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members includes a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating



insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A friction clutch mechanism, as recited in claim 5, for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental

sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

7. Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 7, wherein~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy

generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism

(iv) said outer tapered surface of each of said wedge shoe members includes a third elongated slot and a third lubricating insert member located within said third elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof said third lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly, ~~as recited in claim 14, wherein for~~ absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof:

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;



(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member, said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members include a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy

generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch

mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly, ~~as recited in claim 16, wherein~~ for absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof;

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a

draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after

closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite ;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative

perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said  
friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member  
including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces  
frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a  
respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for  
absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy  
generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft  
gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first  
surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible  
cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined  
portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member  
being mounted to move longitudinally within said housing for  
respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning  
means during application and release of a force on said draft gear  
assembly.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)